Published by the City of Lafayette
Fall 1992
Vol. 2, No. 2

LAFAYETTE VISTAS

STATE BUDGET HITS HOME

In the wake of the recently approved 1992-93 State Budget, Lafayette and the rest of California's cities have been left $200 million leaner. The total loss to Lafayette: slightly over $200,000 or 5% of its $4 million annual operating budget.

To help balance its budget, the state seized city-allocated property taxes. For Lafayette, the property tax loss is just shy of $50,000 annually. The state budget crisis also eliminated Lafayette's cigarette tax revenue, vehicle fines and reduced motor vehicle fees. In '92-93, Lafayette's cigarette tax loss will total $40,000. State-absorbed income from vehicle fines will amount to $41,000, and lost revenue from motor vehicle fees will be over $71,000.

Anticipating the state's mounting accounting crisis, the City Council had already cut Lafayette's '92-93 budget at its June budget hearings. The Council trimmed over $236,000 off Lafayette's annual budget in anticipation of state cuts and in response to other economic factors, such as the steady fall in local sales tax revenue over the past three years.

Lafayette's current budget crunch is compounded by earlier fiscal cuts. Since 1989, the state has withheld over $850,000 in traffic fines, vehicle fees, gasoline, cigarette and other taxes which were earmarked to run the City of Lafayette.

A key concern to Lafayette is its deteriorating infrastructure. Maintenance of essential roads and drainage systems have been shelved indefinitely, and approximately $650,000 in local road maintenance programs has been eliminated. Lafayette has also reduced the police force and imposed a salary freeze for city employees (see "Lafayette's Most Difficult Budget" on page 2).

Although the cuts were not as severe as expected, the state substantially decreased Lafayette's limited resources and sent the city scrambling to provide even the most basic services to maintain the character and quality of our community.

Tax Measure on Ballot

As a result of an economic downturn reflected in reduced sales tax receipts, new charges for county services and municipal budget cuts by the state, the Lafayette City Council has put a tax measure on the November 3 ballot for voter consideration.

The ballot measure asks voters whether or not to impose a utility user's surcharge at the rate of up to, but not to exceed, 4%. The proposed tax would offset local budget cuts from the state, new charges and revenue shortfalls. Income from this new tax could be pledged to reinstate Lafayette's traffic enforcement officer and fund currently suspended street maintenance projects. The ballot measure officially reads: "Lafayette has recently reduced police, public works and other services because of state cutbacks. Shall the City Council impose a surcharge of up to 4% on business and residential intrastate telephone, gas and electric utility bills for general governmental purposes subject to the limitations that (1) the Council must annually review the amount of the surcharge and (2) the surcharge shall end on December 31, 1994."

The City Council asks that all voting-age residents carefully consider this issue and vote on November 3.

Help Shape Public Policy

As a resident of Lafayette, you are encouraged to participate in shaping public policy by contacting your local politicians on issues affecting you, your community and your society. To voice your views on critical political issues, call, write or fax your legislators at the following locations:

State Senator
DANIEL BOATWRIGHT
3086 Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 445-6083
Fax: (916) 446-7367

State Assemblyman
WILLIAM BAKER
3126 Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 445-8528
Fax: (916) 327-2201

Governor
PETE WILSON
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 445-2864
Fax: (916) 445-4633

U.S. Senator
ALAN CRANSTON
112 Hart Building
Washington D.C. 20510
(202) 224-3553

U.S. Senator
JOHN SEYMOUR
902 Hart Building
Washington D.C. 20510
(202) 224-3841

U.S. Representative
RON DELLUMS
2136 Rayburn Building
Washington D.C. 20515

Lafayette's 'Most Difficult' Budget

Lafayette's 1992-93 fiscal budget is "the most difficult budget in the city's history," according to City Manager Bob Adams.

The proposed state budget cuts combined with the recession, new county charges and state raids on city revenues made balancing the city budget an arduous task for local officials. Lafayette's City Council met six times in May and June, often in marathon sessions lasting as long as five hours, to balance this budget. The dismal revenue picture required the Council to take the following measures to keep within the current budget:

- Implement hiring freeze of city employees, 10% of workforce already cut.
- Freeze salaries of all city employees.
- Eliminate one position on police force, equivalent to nearly 10% of total force.
- Defer virtually all public works maintenance projects and halt all preventative maintenance paving and drainage.
- Cut Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program funding by two-thirds.
- Eliminate future support for the Friends of the Lafayette Library.
- Cut funding for spring issue of Lafayette Vistas.
- Reduce operating expenses in all departments, such as overtime, training and equipment. The City has also increased several user fees.

Aside from state cuts that have decreased local government funds, the '92-93 budget reflects revenue losses caused by the recession. Sales tax revenue losses for Lafayette have totaled more than $100,000 annually over the past two years. Other economy-sensitive revenues have also declined, including property transfer taxes, transient occupancy taxes, motor vehicle license fees, and interest earnings on the city's reserve.

The city must also pay for county services previously provided without cost. For example, Lafayette is charged $77,000 annually for animal control services and jail booking fees.

Likewise, state and federal governments now require, but do not fund, a variety of new programs primarily focused on environmental protection. The 1992 cost for these mandated programs is expected to exceed $150,000, a figure that will increase annually.

To keep pace with increasing costs and diminishing funds, there may be more cuts to come. Since Lafayette's resources are intrinsically tied to the state budget, tough times in Sacramento will certainly trickle down to Lafayette. In response to the recent decline in city revenues, the City Council formed a special finance committee made up of experts in cost control to put together a comprehensive list of recommendations on how to manage the city in the most efficient manner.

Police Services Impacted

Lafayette's police force is just one of many departments affected by the slumping economy and recent budget cuts. Lafayette currently has the lowest police/citizen ratio in Contra Costa County and one of the lowest in the state. Here is an overview of the current services provided by Lafayette's police:

- Only two full-time patrol officers are on duty most shifts.
- The force relies heavily on volunteer reserve officers.
- Traffic enforcement officer was eliminated. Remaining patrol officers, who have other important duties, must issue routine traffic violations as time permits.
- Half-time secretary was laid off, closing the police station to walk-up visitation. Without this office support, officers are forced off their patrol to spend precious hours in the station completing accident and crime reports.
- Although force is restricted, one officer still works with our community's young people through Lafayette's Youth Diversion Program.

Lamorinda Traffic Update

In May 1992, 180 Lamorinda (Lafayette, Orinda and Moraga) residents attended the second in a series of workshops regarding the Lamorinda Traffic Study. The goal of this Measure C funded project is to develop a workable transportation plan for Lamorinda that will alleviate traffic congestion while maintaining the semi-rural character of the three communities. Although Moraga's land-locked status continues to be a key issue, the study addresses the entire transportation network of Lamorinda.

At the May workshop, residents showed greater interest in improving overall safety rather than launching large capital improvements. Participants also supported increased public transportation. For example, residents favored a school bus program, increased CCCTA (County Connection) bus service and the creation of a shuttle system to the BART stations.

By participating in workshops, residents provide essential public input needed to create an effective transportation plan. Data collected at workshops is incorporated into the study, which is directed by Barton-Aschman Associates, a transportation planning and traffic engineering firm, and a team of elected officials and professional staff from the three communities.

The Lamorinda Traffic Study has entered its third and final phase. Phase One, which identified existing conditions and problem areas including 53 traffic problem spots, has been completed. Phase Two, identifying improvement strategies and programs, and testing those options to determine their effectiveness and impact, is nearing completion. In Phase Three, the engineering consultants and the committee will take direction from the first two phases and develop a workable transportation plan. Once the study is completed, it will be reviewed and approved by each of the three communities. The transportation improvement plan will then be implemented using $19 million in Measure C tax receipts.

At the next workshop, a draft of the final phase will be presented. The date of this final workshop, tentatively scheduled for early December, will be announced through the city offices.

Park Progress

The Park Lands Blue Ribbon Task Force, appointed by the Lafayette City Council to research the development of community parks and recreational facilities, presented its official findings in July. The task force, made up of 16 Lafayette residents, studied this issue over an intense six-month period. With the help of a professional survey firm, school enrollment statistics, local youth-sports associations and interested citizens, the task force addressed community needs, site selection and funding. A key component of the study was a telephone survey of 400 randomly selected, registered Lafayette voters. Their input serves as the foundation of this report. Below are highlights of the study:

CURRENT PARKS: Lafayette has one of the lowest developed city park acreage per resident ratios in Contra Costa County (0.5 acres per 1,000 residents). Our county's general plan calls for 4 acres per 1,000 residents as a standard. In 1983, the city purchased a 68-acre community park site behind the Lafayette Community Center. This site has gone undeveloped due to the lack of funding. The city also owns several other undeveloped parcels.

POPULATION GROWTH: Based on the 1990 census, there is considerable growth in two population segments with dramatically different recreational needs: the 0-9 year-old segment is up 32% since 1980; the 60+ year-old segment has grown 37%. The city-wide growth rate for the same period is only 13%. This population profile greatly affected the survey results: Respondents with children were more interested in developing parks and recreational facilities than respondents without children.

FUNDING: The present fiscal crisis prevents the city from committing resources to develop open-space, parks, or recreational facilities. Park development will therefore need to be supported by other sources such as federal and state grants, gifts, user fees, or Measure AA funds (voter-approved 1988 park tax measure). A majority of survey respondents (63%) indicated they were willing to pay up to $40 per year to preserve open space. Just short of the majority (48%) were willing to spend an equal amount on parks and playing fields.

OPEN SPACE: In addition to developing recreational facilities, maintaining open space in Lafayette was viewed as one of the most important issues. Over 80% of the residents responding to the survey ranked open space as very important or absolutely essential in maintaining the scenic character of our community. Residents described open space broadly, ranging from public parks to private, undeveloped land.

(continued on back page)

Milestones

"Milestones" will appear in each issue of Lafayette Vistas to provide a schedule of upcoming city issues and an update on past city business.

October

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION OF SORTS – The city is currently revising its "constitution" or General Plan. This all-encompassing planning document will shape the future of our city. Neighborhood meetings have been scheduled to gather input from community members. All Lafayette residents are encouraged to attend.

Burton Valley School:	**Thursday:**	**10/15 @ 7:30 pm**
Lafayette School:	**Saturday:**	**10/17 @ 10 am**
Springhill School:	**Monday:**	**10/19 @ 7:30 pm**
Happy Valley School:	**Tuesday:**	**10/27 @ 7:30 pm**
Chamber of Commerce:	**Thursday:**	**10/29 @ TBA**

OCT 19: CABLE TELEVISION FRANCHISE WORKSHOP – The City Council will meet with Televents, Inc. to discuss renewing the cable operator's franchise agreement in Lafayette. All citizens welcome. 7:30 pm – Lafayette Community Center.

OCT 25: LAFAYETTE RESERVOIR RUN – Join 1,000 runners & walkers on one of the most beautiful courses in Northern California. Celebrate Halloween and run in costume. For registration information call the Chamber of Commerce, (510) 284-7404.

OCT 27: LAFAYETTE LIVE – Televised City Council Meeting. The City Council comes "live" to your living room. The question-and-answer format of this one-hour program will encourage residents to call in and have their questions answered on the air. Cable channel 19 at 7 pm.

OCT 30: HOLIDAY PREVIEW PARTY – Don't miss this gala affair at Orchard Nursery. $15 per person. All proceeds benefit the Lafayette Community Center Foundation. For more information, call (510) 284-2232.

November

NOV 3: ELECTION DAY – Don't forget to vote at your local precinct.

NOV 16: JOINT MEETING: City Council, Parks and Recreation Commission and Parklands Blue Ribbon Task Force – The three groups will coordinate a comprehensive strategy for parks, recreation, and open space in Lafayette. 7:30 pm – Lafayette Community Center.

NOV 22: CHANGING OF THE GUARD – The City Council will elect a new mayor and vice mayor from among its members. 7:30 pm – Lafayette Community Center.

December

DEC 2: HOLIDAY TREE DECORATING PARTY – Celebrate the season by helping decorate the holiday tree at the Senior Services Center. Bring a tree decoration and enjoy carols and refreshments. 3:30-5 pm – Lafayette Community Center.

DEC 5: HOSPICE TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY – The magnificent oak tree at Lafayette Circle and Mt. Diablo Boulevard will be officially lit for the holidays at 4 pm.

DEC 5&6: LAFAYETTE WINTER FESTIVAL & BOUTIQUE – Great food, arts and crafts booths, and a visit from Santa Claus. 10 am-4 pm – Lafayette Community Center.

Planning Director Selected

NIROOP SRIVATSA

After a lengthy search, the city of Lafayette has named **Niroop Srivatsa** as the city's new planning director. Since accepting the position in late August, Niroop has been busy updating the city's general plan and putting together a program to get residents involved in the process through neighborhood meetings.

Before coming to Lafayette, Niroop served as the chief planner for Naperville, Illinois (population 85,000), a semi-rural, upper-middle-class suburb of Chicago. While in Naperville, Niroop prepared and implemented the city's general plan, updated the zoning ordinance, and oversaw all planning. Niroop, who has an undergraduate degree in architecture, has worked in the private sector as an architect and designer. Please join the staff at the city offices in wishing our new planning director much success in her new position.

Park Progress *(continued from page 3)*

PLAYING FIELDS: The most recognized active-use park need is for playing fields. Although local youth teams are able to use facilities throughout Lafayette as well as outside our city, playing fields in and around Lafayette are increasingly inadequate.

PARK PARTNERSHIPS: As a result of current economic conditions throughout the state, partnerships are being created between autonomous public agencies to develop park facilities. Cooperative ventures could be a cost-effective means of developing active-use parks and preserving open space in Lafayette. According to the survey, Lafayette residents do not care who owns a park facility, only that it be available to them for their use.

VOLUNTEERS: A grass-roots program to construct park facilities may be a viable option. 80% of the residents surveyed with children said that they would volunteer to build parks.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN: A multi-phase approach is recommended for meeting the need for parks and open space. Early phases should be predicated on short-term, achievable goals not requiring large amounts of capital expenditure, while later phases would be undertaken once adequate funds were secured. The city's objective should be to provide a broad geographic diversity of recreational offerings. Facilities provided in southern Lafayette should be complemented by facilities in northern Lafayette.

The study provided by the Park Lands Blue Ribbon Task Force goes into greater detail than space allows, including specific short- and long-term recommendations followed closely by detailed financing methods. A copy of this report is available for public viewing in the Lafayette Library and at the City Offices.

The Blue Ribbon Task Force will meet with the City Council and the Parks and Recreation Commission on November 16 at the Lafayette Community Center to address the report and its recommendations. All residents are encourage to attend.

City Directory

Officers

Donald L.Tatzin	**Mayor**
Scott Talan	**Vice Mayor**
Anne Grodin	**Council Member**
Ivor Samson	**Council Member**
Gayle B. Uilkema	**Council Member**

The City Council meets at 7:30 pm on the second and fourth Monday of the month at the Lafayette Community Center, 500 St. Mary's Road.

Staff

Robert F.D. Adams	**City Manager**
Steven Falk	**Assist. City Manager**
Sue Jusaitis	**City Clerk**
Mark Lander	**City Engineer**
Jennifer Russell	**Parks and Recreation Director**
Ed McNair	**Public Works Superintendent**
Mike Weymouth	**Police Services Mgr.**
Niroop Srivatsa	**Planning Director**

City Offices and Police

Street Address:	**3675 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Suite 210**
Mailing Address:	**P.O. Box 1968 Lafayette, CA 94549-1968**

City Telephone Numbers

Administration:	**284-1968**
Engineering:	**284-1951**
Planning:	**284-1976**
Parks and Rec:	**284-2232**
Public Works:	**283-6271**
Senior Services:	**284-5050**
Police Business:	**284-5010**
Police Emergency:	**911**

LAFAYETTE VISTAS

is published for the residents of Lafayette and reports on issues, people and events that affect our city. As a member of this community, you are encouraged to contact us with your questions and comments. We request all correspondence be sent to:

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